

REMARKS

The Advisory Action dated March 2, 2004 has been carefully considered.

Claims 4, 5, 8, 9, 12 and 16 have been amended to obviate the Examiner's rejection. Claims 19-21 have been added. Support for claims 19-21 is found in original claim 3. No new matter has been added.

Claim 16 has been amended to the original claim 16. Applicants note that the raw material liquid is formed in the collection column as recited in claims 1 and 5.

With regard to claim 8, Applicants note that the raw material liquid recited in claims 8 and 9 is the same as the initially recited in the preamble of claim 8 as a raw material liquid containing (meth)acrylic acid substantially free from azeotropic solvents. Applicants confirm that there is no solvent added or present in the collection column. Applicants have amended claims 4, 5, 8, and 9 to delete the term "substantially" to provide further confirmation.

Claim 9 has been amended to depend from claim 8.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and request that all claims be allowed. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned should he believe that this would expedite prosecution of this application. It is believed that no fee is required. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-2165.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: March 24, 2004



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